

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

S E C R E T STATE 239611

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, US, KU, SA

SUBJECT: LEBANESE INTERNAL SITUATION

1. WE ARE INCREASINGLY CONCERNED THAT LEBANON MAY FACE A CONTINUING DETERIORATION OF CENTRAL AUTHORITY AND EVENTUAL CIVIL WAR. WE SEE IN THIS PROSPECT NOT ONLY SERIOUS RISK TO STABILITY OF LEBANON ITSELF BUT THREAT OF RENEWED MIDDLE EAST HOSTILITIES IF SYRIA AND ISRAEL ARE DRAWN IN, AS THEY MIGHT WELL BE IF LEBANESE INTERNAL SITUATION GETS OUT OF HAND.

2. YOU SHOULD RAISE LEBANESE SITUATION WITH HOST GOVERNMENT AT HIGH LEVEL AS MATTER OF COMMON INTEREST. EXPRESS OUR CONCERNS AS IN PRECEDING PARAGRAPH, AND SAY THAT IN THIS SITUATION WE WANT TO CONSULT SAUDIS AND KUWAITIS TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON STATE OF AFFAIRS IN LEBANON AND ON STEPS THAT MIGHT BE TAKEN TO FORESTALL POSSIBLE SLIDE INTO

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CHAOS.

3. IN LATTER RESPECT, WE ARE APPROACHING ISRAELIS, AS WE HAVE DONE FROM TIME TO TIME, TO URGE RESTRAINT IN ANY ACTIONS LIKELY TO AFFECT LEBANON. WE ARE ALSO URGING SOVIETS TO COUNSEL MODERATION WITHIN LEBANON AND AVOID EXACERBATING ALREADY DANGEROUS SITUATION. OCCURS TO US

THAT LINKS SAUDIS AND KUWAITIS HAVE TO PALESTINIAN GROUPS, ARAFAT IN PARTICULAR, MIGHT PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR THEM TO WEIGH IN TO SAME EFFECT. PALESTINIAN FORCES ARE VERY IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN LEBANESE SITUATION. LEADERSHIP OF MAIN GROUPS (PLO/FATAH AND SAIQA) HAS PLAYED CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN HELPING CONSTRAIN RECENT FIGHTING. LEBANESE LEFTISTS AND PALESTINIAN REJECTIONISTS, HOWEVER, HAVE WITH LIBYAN AND IRAQI SUPPORT SOUGHT TO CREATE CRISIS THAT WOULD DRAW IN MAJOR PALESTINIAN GROUPS. IT IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT, IN INTEREST OF COUNTRY'S STABILITY, THAT PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP HOLDS TO MODERATE TACK, AND GIVEN CONTINUING PRESSURES ON THEM FOR SHIFT TO MORE RADICAL COURSE WE ALL SHOULD DO WHAT WE CAN TO ENCOURAGE CONTINUED MODERATION. KISSINGER

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